

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT RECORD KOBUK-SEWARD PENINSULA RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Meeting Location: Koyuk, Alaska

Meeting Date: April 20, 2004

Purpose: Identify public issues and concerns with BLM-managed lands in the Planning Area.

Number of public in attendance: 25

BLM personnel in attendance: Jeanie Cole and Tom Sparks

Meeting format: Through a PowerPoint presentation, attendees were introduced to what an RMP does and why BLM is doing a new one. They were also given examples of decisions that might come out of an RMP. They had the opportunity to review maps of land status, State-identified RS2477 routes, reindeer grazing allotments, anadromous streams, Seward 1008 PLO locations (mineral entry), guide use areas, and game management units in the Planning Area. Participants were asked to express their concerns and issues with BLM-managed public lands. These are documented below. An Interested Party letter explaining the types of decisions made in the RMP and giving an overview of the initial steps in planning was distributed. In addition, a small-scale map of the planning area, a copy of the planning website home page, and copy of the PowerPoint presentation were available for attendees to take. A scoping comment sheet that can either be filled out at the meeting or returned to BLM at a later date was also made available to attendees.

Issues/Questions/Concerns:

1. The headwaters of the rivers around Koyuk are very important for subsistence (Koyuk, Ungalik, and Inglutalik)
2. Wild and Scenic Rivers: would designation of a river as wild and scenic put restrictions on subsistence use such as motorized boats? Would it stop the State from putting roads across the rivers? Would uses be curtailed?
3. There are a lot of furbearers in the Koyuk region (headwaters) but the price of fur is too low for people to go out and trap them other than for personal use. Furbearer populations cycle from low to high and no one can manage that, it is a natural process.
4. Keep the BLM lands the same as they are now.
5. The backgrounds of the people writing the plan should be made available so people know how much experience they have.

6. BLM needs to monitor caribou habitat on the summer and calving grounds for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. There are caribou starving up there in August and September.
7. Recommend no change in the reindeer grazing program. Herders have enough problems with caribou without BLM restricting the areas they can use.
8. Four-wheelers are becoming more of a problem/issue. They destroy the berries. More of a problem on Native Corporation lands near the village.
9. Not in favor of restricting four-wheeler use: "We might want to use four-wheelers to go and get a moose sometime."
10. Tourism: If tourism would benefit Koyuk, then some people are in favor of non-consumptive type uses like bird watching or floaters. Others at the meeting were opposed to increasing tourism in the area.
11. As transportation improves, more people from other villages in the region come to the Koyuk area to hunt. The area is very important to more than just the residents of Koyuk. The area is important to the entire Bering Straits region.
12. Concern about land disposal: Would not want outsiders coming in and buying land near the village. They would be interested if land sales could be limited to local residents.
13. Concern about feasibility of grazing by bison: How much would they eat and is there enough forage available. Would they become a problem like the muskoxen? People prefer to eat caribou and moose.
14. Water pollution caused by abandoned boats and off-road vehicles that still have fuel and oil in the engine should be addressed in the EIS. Are many abandoned motors and vehicles laying around along the rivers.
15. Norton Bay is a very important area for subsistence and supporting wildlife/fisheries populations. The area supports fish/wildlife resources that migrate to other areas of the State. The area is important on a statewide level.
16. Moose populations are declining in the area and it is more difficult to get moose.
17. Subsistence is more important than recreational use. Preserving subsistence resources is the most important issue for the plan to address.
"Local people are tied to the fish and wildlife"
"What are we going to eat if recreational hunters take all the moose?"
18. The Tribes should be asked first what they want. They have hunted the first before any others. They are interested in co-management.
19. There are not enough Native Corporation lands around Koyuk. Koyuk should have gotten a reservation.
20. Granite Mountain or Koyuk Hot Springs is a cultural resource that should be protected.
21. BLM should support the findings of the Bering Straits Coastal Resource Service Area Board and not make any changes. The Board found that subsistence was the most important use of the area.
22. People caribou hunt in the headwaters of the Ungalik River and East Fork. All the headwaters are important.
23. There was a discussion of putting in an airstrip upriver to allow better access for recreational use. There was opposition to the idea of BLM authorizing construction of airstrips to improve access to the area.

24. BLM should come back and have another meeting in Koyuk when the draft plan is available. October through February is the best time to hold meetings as more people are around the village.
25. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!"
26. Concern about OHVs: They are getting larger and more powerful, allowing people to go farther and into areas they couldn't get into before. Given this situation, will any OHV designations we come up with in the plan still be effective after 10-15 years? OHV might not be an issue now, but could be before the new plan is outdated in another 15 years.